

June 26 2020

# Noticias y Notas

News and notes from the Second Judicial District Court

## A word from the chief

### The court's must uphold the principle of equal justice

Our courts have an essential role in ensuring justice for all and preserving the rights guaranteed by our Constitution. What we have witnessed in our great country over recent weeks raises issues that are now at the forefront of our minds and our collective conversations.

This is a time where we must ask ourselves if we can do better and live up to our commitment of equal justice under the law. The courts must be a place where everyone who enters the court-house doors will be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect regardless of race or background.

Racial disparity and inequality are not new issues in this country. How do you reconcile what we have seen and heard with anything righteous or just? My heart, like many others, is once again broken and filled with sadness for the senseless loss of life that cannot be restored by any attempts of sentiment or words of misplaced understanding.

We have so much more that makes us alike than different. We are better as a country. We are better as a people. We are called to recognize our commitment to achieving justice by ending racism.

How do I know this? I have had the privilege over the last fourteen years of working in an environment here at the Second Judicial District Court where we, as citizens of this community, embrace diversity, equality and service to others. Our core mission is to provide a forum for the fair and equal access to the justice system established primarily to redress the wrongs in society no matter the color of your skin, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "It is impossible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people." I am incredibly proud to be a part of this SJDC community. Thank you all for working so hard to advance the cause of justice.

**Chief Judge Stan Whitaker**

## Treatment Court teams taking extra steps to support clients during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a life-altering experience for everyone. But for some people—including some clients in the SJDC's Treatment Courts—it has been almost life-shattering.

This population has been among the hardest hit by job loss, food shortages and other hardships. For some of them, these changes threatened efforts to recover from the addictions or psychological trauma underlying the behavior that brought them into the criminal justice system.

Recognizing these facts, the SJDC Treatment Court teams have taken extra steps to support their clients.

"When we are talking about Young Adult Court, Mental Health Court, and even the Juvenile Treatment Court, these are people who are in the very early stages of recovery," said Coral Mendez-Flores, the Young Adult Court Lead Worker.

"We were seeing people in fear. Some of them had lost jobs, then they had stay-at-home orders forcing them into isolation. We saw a few relapses," added Tanya Tijerina, Clinical Operations Manager for the Treatment Courts. "So, we had to find a way to stay in close contact with them."

[For the full story, click here.](#)



## Shout outs



**This is the space where we sound the horn for outstanding performances.**

This week's shout out goes to the all of the **Bailiffs, Court Reporters and Court Monitors who have staffed courtrooms for the past three months to keep hearings going.**

In addition to just being present in the courtroom, these folks have to work almost full time with their face masks on. For your commitment, **We Salute You!**

**Have news to share?**

Send it to:

[albdshx@nmcourt.gov](mailto:albdshx@nmcourt.gov)

## More SJDC masks on parade



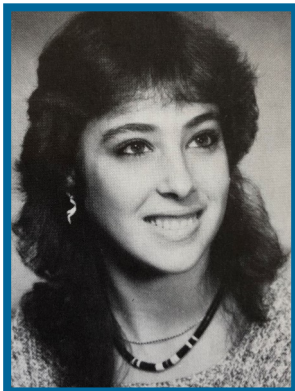
Last week, we featured the winning designs in the Second Judicial District Face Mask Contest. This week, we are showing you how tough this competition was by displaying the creative designs that did not win the contest. At left, is the beautiful butterfly design by Janet Van Why from HR. In the center, is another colorful design from Luz Garcia in the Domestic Relations Division. At right, Darlene Cook, Bailiff for Judge, Gerard Lavelle, models her cat-face mask.

The remaining designs are [posted here](#).

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### *Identify the graduate*

Again, we had several interesting guesses for last week's photo. However, Eric Mitchell in Human Resources was the first to correctly identify the graduate as Judge Alisa Hart. Eric, see your colleague [Janet Van Why](#) to claim your prize.



This week's graduate photo is [posted here](#). Again, the first person to correctly identify the graduate wins. Send answers to [albdxh@nmcourts.gov](mailto:albdxh@nmcourts.gov)